

My name is Joanna Turner and as a former FFA member and Ag science student, I encourage you all to support this bill in favor of the future ag science students in the 21 ASTE programs that the state currently has.

I was humbled and very honored to have been able to attend the Vernon E. Cleaves Agricultural Science and Technology program at Lyman Hall High School in Wallingford, Connecticut. While I was at Lyman Hall, I took the large animal equine science class and I absolutely fell in love with the class, the barn animals, the curriculum, and my teacher and I are still very close friends to this day. In addition to taking the large animal science class, I was involved in the FFA chapter that Lyman Hall had. I did CDEs or career development events in Horse Evaluation where I placed 8<sup>th</sup> in the state my senior year, and I also was fortunate enough to compete in Envirothon and attend practices for the Food Science CDE, which ultimately was cancelled due to the ongoing covid-19 pandemic. I also served as Chapter President my senior year and was able to go to Indianapolis, Indiana for the 92<sup>nd</sup> National FFA Convention and Expo, which I would not have been able to go to without being in ag.

Although I have moved on from Lyman Hall, I am still very involved in the agricultural world in our great state. I served as Connecticut FFA State Officer from 2020-2021 and was privileged to serve as the state secretary with an amazing group of teammates. I now attend the University of Connecticut at Storrs and I am an animal science and agriculture and natural resources double major with plans on being an agricultural education teacher. In addition to attending UCONN, I work at the University Horse Barn, and I volunteer as a herdsman for the dairy show, and I help students who are not animal science major handle both jersey and Holstein heifers and work with them. It has been an amazing experience working in the horse barn and working with the heifers on campus.

I urge you to please support bill #5283. Without the agricultural education programs in our state, future students would be missing out on career development, learning teamwork and employability skills, and developing many important relationships that last for years after completion of the program